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My Job as a Cruise Ship Captain
(and My Existence as a Cruise Ship)

— A Very Short Story —

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I am the captain of a giant cruise ship. As a captain, I am responsible for the welfare of the passengers, the crew, and the ship. So, unlike those captains who easily abandon their passengers and ships to save themselves, I will *never* leave the ship until everyone is safe and everything is right. I try my best to sustain the entire community of the organic and inorganic matters involved in this business ... as long as possible.

People might think that I, as a captain, have a total, or at least substantial control over the operation of my ship. This is not so. There always are factors that go beyond my control. For example, the environment can be destructive. In this regard, I am sympathetic to Edward Smith, the captain of the RMS *Titanic*. Regardless of the truth behind his story, it is clear that the notion of "unsikable" was a myth, against the brute force of the nature.

Of course, I work with my crew with my utmost respect. Still, we are all separate individuals. There are times when we disagree. There are times when our actions are not coordinated well. There are times when people, including I myself, are incapable of doing their parts due to physical and/or mental conditions. The consequence can be disastrous.

Even when everything else is functioning all right, there might be a problem with passengers. For example, under a strenuous condition, the passengers may panic. This is particularly dangerous because the resources on the ship are quite limited. And sometimes,

the sheer number of passengers could cause a catastrophe.

Then, what would be the best I can do? The only way I can think of is as follows. Everybody and everything involved in this business needs to assume their role and work together to sustain the whole business. I am the one who strive to set up and maintain such a community. This might sound simple. But if I can *actually* do that. I should be quite satisfied.

Now, my body consists of trillions of cells. Not just millions or billions. In addition, I am the host of probably, equally numerous microorganisms. So, naturally, I am responsible for sustaining all the organic and inorganic matters involved in this business ... as long as possible.

And just like the situation on my ship, I need to consider the environment, the microorganisms (passengers?), my organic body parts (crew?), and my inorganic body parts (ship?). Do I have a total, or at least substantial control over the operation of my mind and body? Well, probably not as much as I think. Then, what can I do?

That may not be so different from my roll as the captain of a cruise ship. Everybody and everything involved in this business needs to assume their role and work together to sustain the whole business. I am the one who strive to set up and maintain such a community. This might sound simple. But if I can *actually* do that. I should be quite satisfied.

By the way, what about the leader of an organization or a country? If they think and behave as the (responsible) captain of a cruise ship, wouldn't the whole business be good?